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Baldridge Warns of 'Giveaway' Of Strategic Secrets to Soviets

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The Pentagon and other federal agencies allow military and technical secrets to slip into Soviet hands by failing to check documents before they are automatically declassified, Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldridge complained in a letter to five top Reagan administration officials.

Baldridge sought help more than a month ago to stop "this massive giveaway program that permits the Soviets to acquire tens of thousands of scientific and technical studies as well as other strategic information," according to a four-page letter made available to The Washington Post.

There was no indication yesterday that Baldridge has received any response from his Jan. 16 letter to Secretary of State George P. Shultz, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, former Energy secretary Donald P. Hodel, White House National Security Adviser Robert C. McFarlane, and James Beggs, administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Through a spokesman, Baldridge declined to comment on the letter, saying he does not discuss classified matters. In the letter, however, he cited "inadequate" results to his requests since 1982 for cooperation from the Defense and Energy Departments and NASA to protect strategic information.

Baldridge was particularly annoyed by what he considered the easy availability of sensitive documents of the Defense Department, with which the Commerce Department has quarreled repeatedly over the leakage of strategic high-technology products to the East bloc. Among the studies that Baldridge said are available to the Soviets is one called "A Simulation Model of the Army's Command Control

Communications and Intelligence Process" that was prepared by the Defense Department.

The documents problem developed, Baldridge said, because "previous administrations" opened up vast amounts of government studies "to combat what they perceived to be over-classification" and to allow greater public access to government-financed studies. Although Commerce operates the National Technical Information Service (NTIS), which acts as a clearinghouse to make these documents available to the public, Baldridge said his department lacks the legal authority to stop the declassification process.

"Moscow has unlimited access to all information in NTIS through the All-Union Scientific Research Institute, which is a prominent subscriber to this source of data," the Commerce secretary said.

He blamed the release of military secrets on "the apparent unwillingness to date of the pertinent government agencies" to commit money and personnel, even though the Reagan administration tightened rules to stem "this hemorrhage" of strategically sensitive information.

The Defense Department, for instance, set up an agency to check studies before they are declassified, but its "ability to review the annual volume of documents is limited" because its appropriations are too small for the job, he said.

The issue was first raised in 1982, Baldridge said, and despite efforts by the Commerce Department and intelligence agencies to get help from the Defense and Energy Departments and NASA, "the results to date have been wholly inadequate."

Among the studies available to the Soviets, Baldridge said, were DOD analyses of space weapons, chemical warfare, nuclear weapons, computer security, high technology telecommunications, electronics, computers and lasers. Energy Department anal-

ysis of nuclear energy and high intensity physics and NASA analysis of space and rocket technology.

Other studies that were released dealt with the cutting edge of militarily significant technology such as lasers and composite materials used in warheads and jet fighters, Baldridge said. He said government scientists who saw samples of the information in the studies concluded that they are "tremendously beneficial" to the Soviets.

"Taken as a whole, the reports give Moscow new material information to corroborate previous lab work, focus future approaches and eliminate costly trial-and-error processes," Baldridge said the scientists concluded.

As an example, he cited a July study prepared for the U.S. intelligence community that showed Moscow used at least 60 previously classified U.S. documents in developing its cruise missile. Ninety percent of them originated in the Defense Department, with 22 coming out of the NTIS clearinghouse.

"The potential danger to our national security is that through the giveaway program the Soviets have access to studies and strategic information covering much of the same type of technologies and products that the administration is trying to keep out of Soviet hands through the multilateral export control system," Baldridge asserted.

Pentagon officials long have complained over what they consider the poor operation of export controls by the Commerce Department and this year gained more authority over exports after a battle that finally was settled by the president.

The Defense Department, in turn, was blamed by the State Department's former expert on East-West trade, William Root, for allowing strategic high technology products to remain uncontrolled by taking too tough a line for U.S. allies in Cocom, the Paris-based Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls that decides what can be sold to Soviet-bloc nations.